

Brinscall St John's C.E./ Methodist Primary School



English Policy

Date of policy: Autumn 2025

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Review date: Autumn 2026

Intent

At Brinscall St John's, we believe that a quality English curriculum should develop children's love of reading, writing and discussion.

'If reading is breathing in, then writing is breathing out'

We aim to inspire an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage and a habit of reading widely and often so that children develop cultural understanding and become more aware of the world around them. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing, can write clearly and accurately and demonstrate their creativity through a range of writing opportunities. We want to inspire children to be confident in the art of speaking and listening so that they can engage with others.

Teachers should develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.

DfE 2014 National Curriculum

We believe that children need to develop a secure knowledge-base in English, which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. Therefore, children need to be taught skills with rigour but be encouraged to apply them in a creative way, making use of the environment to inspire children. We believe that a secure basis in English skills is crucial to a high-quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate fully as a member of society and fully shine with the light of Jesus.

In our school, we want all children to **'Shine with the light of Jesus'**. At the heart of our ethos, we aim to view each child's needs as an individual and to set high yet achievable goals for every child in all aspects of English so that they are able to shine. We use targeted assessment and tracking to support individuals on their learning journeys. We primarily aim to provide an English curriculum that is inspiring, fun and engaging for all our children, instilling in them a love of performing, reading for pleasure, writing independently and a wealth of opportunities to discuss and debate.

Aims

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and English by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment and a variety of purposeful writing opportunities. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding

- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Spoken Language

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of both reading and writing and high-quality speaking and listening activities will be a major feature of our high-quality teaching at St John's. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves, as well as to others, and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge through a range of drama, debate and role-play activities. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances. As part of our commitment to curriculum enhancement, all children throughout their school career will have access to live theatre/drama, poetry and storytelling.

The National Curriculum states that all pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English.' Therefore, at St John's we shall encourage:

- children and staff to talk in complete sentences (using Standard English where applicable)
- our pupils to ask questions, be curious and to ask and answer questions to check understanding
- the development of a wide-ranging vocabulary
- the ability to negotiate and cooperate with others
- evaluation skills and the ability to build upon ideas
- the correct choice of register (formal/informal) to suit the task/audience
- structured talk and debate

- talking to help organise thinking and ideas as a bridge to high quality writing.

We shall encourage all our pupils to speak clearly and with confidence and to express themselves orally in an appropriate way. In addition, we shall focus on high quality listening skills, ensuring that pupils have opportunities to work with ‘talk partners’ and in collaborative groups and to share and record ideas together. To support this aim we will:

- plan engaging speaking and listening activities that involve inclusive, full participation by all pupils
- make provision for children with specific speech, language and auditory needs and ensure that these children have targeted support
- encourage home learning that includes talk time activities
- provide opportunities in school for children to speak publicly – assemblies, class workshops and plays.

These crucial skills are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing areas which follow.

Reading

We are committed as a school family to promote a life-long love of reading. All members of the school community act as reading leaders for the children, modelling a love of reading and supporting the children in their mission to become fluent readers. At the forefront of our reading ethos is ensuring that the children leave St John’s, with the ability to read fluently and to comprehend the written word so they can ‘acquire knowledge’ and also ‘build on what they already know.’ It is essential that, by the end of their primary education with us, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject ready for lifelong learning.

The programmes of study for reading at EYFS, key stage 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- word reading (phonics)
- comprehension (both listening and reading).

It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils’ competence and fluency in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each. This policy is linked to our Early Reading and Phonics policy too.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words (sight word recognition). Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page (graphemes) represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why at St John’s systematic, synthetic phonics is taught rigorously in the early teaching of reading, using the Red Rose Phonics Scheme with fidelity. (Refer to Early Reading and Phonics policy for more detailed information).

Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils’ experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories,

poems and non-fiction. All pupils at St John's are encouraged to read widely across both fiction, non-fiction and poetry to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum.

Reading widely increases pupils' vocabulary when they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech and this exposure is supported by structured questioning and clarification of word meaning. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-trove of wonder and joy for curious young minds. It develops the spiritual dimension of the child, allowing them to empathise, be inspired and learn from the lives of others.

Daily guided reading sessions, outside of the English lesson, from Reception to Year 6, will further enhance and develop the above skills of comprehension and word reading. The regular use of reading journals will encourage children to respond to texts in a variety of ways. This may incorporate a range of different activities such as whole-class guided reading, or small grouped guided reading activities that focus closely on the reading domains (Year Two onwards). In EYFS and Year One, carefully structured activities will be conducted in small groups or on a 1:1 basis to support the development of early reading skills.

Through our tailored English curriculum, we aim to expose the children to a wide range of texts, focusing on the importance of full class texts/shared novels and classic literature for our literary heritage. The children will experience 'classic' literature, plays and poems and will learn stories and poems by heart. We aim to:

- encourage the children to have a wide reading diet, which is supported using our progressive school reading scheme but will also include a wider variety of texts
- encourage all children to read for pleasure and get 'lost' in their book. This is done through high quality modelling by staff, enthusiastic book talk, weekly use of the school library, involvement in themed days (book fairs, storyteller / visitors to school, World Book day, National Poetry day)
- give reading a positive status in our curriculum and school day by planning a diverse range of reading opportunities and setting reading challenges as their skills develop into fluency, that inspire
- encourage pupils to use a wide range of information books to help them comprehend and support learning across the curriculum
- read books from a diverse range of genres and from their literary heritage during their school career
- read across the curriculum so that children embed their skills across a range of subjects.

Writing

The programmes of study for writing in EYFS and key stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those for reading with two main strands identified. These are:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

At Brinscall St. John's, follow Lancashire's English scheme. As a school, we use and apply the schemes/units of work for each year group, with teachers using their professional judgement to adapt and tailor plans to suit the needs of their cohort. Teachers may select and choose the skills and activities they feel are more appropriate for their year group, in order to fulfil the expectations of the national curriculum.

It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions highlighted above. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. These aspects of writing have been incorporated into the programmes of study for composition.

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure), orthography (spelling structure) and etymology (roots of) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

At St. John's we aim to ensure that our pupils can:

- develop writing stamina and can write with increasing detail
- use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar so they can communicate effectively
- write in a range of ways and across genres
- write to support and respond to texts they have read
- write in a clear and progressively cursive style (refer to handwriting policy).

Implementation

- teach Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling daily, using a variety of teaching approaches and encourage the implementation of these skills in writing
- model appropriate grammar in both speech and writing
- have a systematic approach to teaching spelling and phonics – Red Rose Phonics (EYFS and Y1) and No Nonsense Spellings (Y2-6)
- use high quality texts to support good practice
- encourage and promote oral rehearsal of ideas
- use our assessment and feedback policy to ensure that written work (across the curriculum) is appropriately marked and next steps feedback given
- encourage a joined, cursive handwriting style (see handwriting policy) to support spelling, speed and fluency of writing
- celebrate children's writing by displaying written work around school
- use the outdoors to inspire children in their writing and help create a sense of awe and wonder

Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary arise naturally from their reading and writing. As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. Teachers will also develop pupils' vocabulary through focused teaching. Children in KS2 will be encouraged to use a dictionary and thesaurus with growing independence to help them develop their understanding of new vocabulary. See 'non-negotiables for GPS' below.

Attainment, Targets and Assessment

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. Staff assess pupils' learning as part of every session and adapt their practice accordingly. They use a range of assessment for learning strategies to track pupil attainment in English. Learning and Progression documents provide broken down steps to enable staff to assess, plan, teach and differentiate. Formal assessments of reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling are carried out and monitored at least termly (see assessment policy for details of assessment cycle). The English subject leader and Senior Leadership Team share tracking data and intervention information to ensure progression and provision mapping across the school. Moderation of work is carried out each term and by the subject leader and Senior Leadership Team to ensure that standards of assessment are benchmarked. Staff and support staff are updated with regards to forthcoming professional development and the consultancy team from Lancashire provide staff training within school.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years in line with the school's policy review programme and in light of the National Curriculum 2014. The subject leader is responsible for reporting to the governors' curriculum committee about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

Equal Opportunities

We ensure that each individual child receives an equal learning experience regardless of ability, culture and gender.



Brinscall St John's CE and Methodist Primary School

English Lesson Non-Negotiables

All classes from Y1 to Y6 will have an English book and an independent write book. EYFS have an English book.

English lessons from Y1-Y6 taught daily for 1 hour usually in the morning unless otherwise agreed. EYFS English input completed daily followed by 1:1 or small group work.

Each unit within all classes from Reception to Y6 will be taken from the Lancashire scheme.

Writing units agreed by lead and not changed unless discussed. Minimum of 2 poetry units to be taught across the year,

Planning to be completed at the start of each new writing unit and saved on the OneDrive

Teachers to decide what sections of each writing unit are to be covered dependent on the needs of their class and in line with year group National curriculum expectations.

Working wall

A working wall will be used for English. This will reflect the current unit and skills taught. These will be kept up-to-date and show current learning.

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GPS Non-Negotiables

In KS2 GPS will be taught daily for 15 mins every afternoon unless otherwise agreed with the lead. In year 2 GPS will be taught within phonics time – phase 6. GPS in EYFS and Y1 will be taught within phonics and English lessons.

GPS skills will be taken from looking ahead at English lessons and pre-teaching/ consolidating a skill or will be taken directly from the NC linked to the specific year group

Spelling

Y2-Y6 to follow no nonsense spelling scheme for their year group. Previous year groups can be covered as and where needed to address gaps/misconceptions.

Previous year groups may be used as an intervention for specific children.

Spellings will be set at the start of the half term and shared with parents electronically and via a printed copy. This will link to teaching within no nonsense spelling, phonics sounds or tricky/ common exception words.

The spellings children are given to rehearse at home should have the spelling pattern indicated on the sheet to remind and support the children and their families who might support them at home. These spellings should be the pattern/rule learned the previous week not the current spellings being taught in class. This is to ensure that the children are given another opportunity to re-visit and retain a spelling pattern.

Spelling tests will take place in all classes from Y1 to Y6 on a Friday.

Spelling pattern / words / rules should be displayed in the classroom and added to throughout the year to ensure that all staff and children are aware of the learning and can then mark accordingly.

GPS Planning and Books

GPS focus will be highlighted on the genre overview sheet completed at the start of each new English unit.

GPS lessons will be completed in GPS and handwriting books. GPS lessons will start with the short date and then a G for grammar, P for punctuation and S for spelling in a circle.

GPS should be marked to move the learning forward.

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Handwriting and Presentation Non-Negotiables

Handwriting

All classes from reception to Year 6 follow the letter join cursive writing scheme.

Handwriting is taught in a discrete lesson during early bird work daily within all classes from Y1-Y6 and consolidated within all other subject areas.

Within EYFS, Handwriting is taught daily within the phonics lessons and is given high priority when completing focussed writing tasks. Handwriting prompt sheets should be accessible within several areas of provision and regular praise and encouragement given for children to form letters accurately using their lead ins when in the provision.

Cursive handwriting is used at all times, in all lessons following the letter join scheme, this includes writing displayed on working walls.

Handwriting prompt sheets should be available in all classes and used where needed to support individual children.

Presentation

Children within Y2 and above will write the long date and LO within all pieces of work and then underline these with a ruler. The short date is written for maths with dots between the numbers. Each line of writing is begun near the margin.

When a mistake is made, it is crossed out with one single line – we do not use rubbers.

Teacher's writing is a good, clear example of cursive writing modelling the Letter join scheme

A ruler is used to rule off the last piece of work

Pen Licence

These will be given when a child demonstrates good handwriting and presentation within 3 pieces of work, one of these should be in a curriculum subject. A licence may be given to any child from Year 2 upwards. These will be awarded within celebration assembly.

Books

All classes from Y1 to Y6 will have a separate GPS and handwriting book.

Children will start a handwriting lesson with the short date and a H or in a circle next to the date.

Handwriting does not need to be marked but there should be evidence of verbal feedback being given and modelling/support of incorrect formation.

Presentation within all subjects should be of the same high expectation and standard.

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